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BEAMINSTER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1937.

Medical Officer of Health:

ADAM ARMIT, M.B., CH.B., D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector ~~& Surveyor~~:

C. C. RUNDLE, A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A.

HINE & SON, PRINTERS, BRIDPORT.

BEAMINSTER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present to you my First Annual Report on the Health of the District for the year 1937. I only commenced my duties as Medical Officer of Health for the Area on the 1st November, the post having been vacated in August by Dr. James D. Mackay, who had been Medical Officer since July, 1936. After his resignation in August, Dr. P. Morton acted as temporary Medical Officer of Health from August to the 31st October.

I should like to express my appreciation of the tremendous help given me by Mr. Rundle, your Sanitary Inspector, since I took up my duties, for the collaboration of the other Officers of the Council, and for the courtesy shown me by all the members of the Council.

I am,

Yours Obediently,

ADAM ARMIT,

Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area (in Acres)	58,693 ~~32,150~~
Registrar-General's Estimate of resident population, mid-year, 1937	7,719
Number of Persons per Acre	0.1 ~~0.2~~
Number of Inhabited Houses (end of 1937) according to Rate Books	2,415
Rateable Value	£30,363
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£125 16s. 3d.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

This District stretches from Bridport Rural District in the South, to the Somerset Border in the North, and from the Devon border in the West to the Dorchester Rural District in the East. It is composed of 26 parishes.

METEOROLGY

I am obliged to Mr. W. Stiby for supplying the following data.

	Total Rainfall in Inches	No. of Rain Days
January	6.71	26
February	6.87	24
March	4.68	22
April	2.46	17
May	3.28	12
June	1.36	10
July	3.39	12
August	1.07	6
September	3.30	15
October	4.80	13
November	2.39	10
December	5.29	17
	45.60	184

INDUSTRIES

The chief Industry is Agriculture and Dairy Farming. There are milk factories at Beaminster and Chard Junction.

VITAL STATISTICS

		Total	M.	F.	
Live Births	Legitimate ...	101	57	44	Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 13.34
	Illegitimate ...	2	2	–	
		—	—	—	
	Total	103	59	44	
Still Births—Total		1			Rate per 1,000 Total (live and still) Births 9.6
	Legitimate ...			1	
	Illegitimate ...				
Deaths...		105	56	49	Crude Death Rate-13.6
					Comparative Death Rate-11.02
					Comparability Factor-0.81
Deaths from Puerperal causes				0	

	M.	F.
Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age...	3	3
Legitimate	3	3
Illegitimate	0	0

Infantile Death Rate—58 per 1,000 live births.

INFANTILE DEATH RATE

Age		Sex	Cause
3 days	...	M	Premature Birth
1 day	..	F	Congenital Atelectasis
1 week	...	F	Cerebral Haemorrhage
1 minute	...	M	Cerebral Haemorrhage
1 month	...	M	Whooping Cough
10 minutes	...	F	Shock and Asphyxiation

	Causes	Males	Females	
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid ...	—	—	
2	Measles	—	—	
3	Scarlet Fever	—	—	
4	Whooping Cough	2	—	
5	Diptheria	—	—	
6	Influenza	4	5	
7	Encephalitis Lethargica ...	—	—	
8	Cerebro-spinal Fever	—	—	
9	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	1	1	
10	Other Tuberculosis	2	—	
11	Syphilis	—	—	
12	G.P.I. Tabes	—	—	
13	Cancer	7	9	
14	Diabetes	1	—	
15	Cerebral Haemorrhage	8	3	
16	Heart Disease	15	14	
17	Aneurysm	—	—	
18	Other Circulatory Diseases ...	—	2	
19	Bronchitis	1	1	
20	Pneumonia (all forms)	—	2	
21	Other Respiratory Diseases ...	—	—	
22	Peptic Ulcer	1	—	
23	Diarrhoea (under 2 years) ...	—	—	
24	Appendicitis	—	—	
25	Cirrhosis of the Liver	1	—	
26	Other Liver Diseases	—	—	
27	Other Digestive Diseases ...	—	1	
28	Acute and Chronic Nephritis ...	—	—	
29	Puerperal Sepsis	—	—	
30	Other Puerperal Diseases ...	—	—	
31	Con. Debility. Prematurity ...	2	3	
32	Senility	4	5	
33	Suicide	1	—	
34	Other Violence	2	—	
35	Other Defined Diseases ...	4	2	
36	Ill Defined or Unknown ...	—	1	
37	Diarrhoea over 2 years	—	—	
	Total	56	49	105

COMPARATIVE VITAL STATISTICS

	Beaminster	England and Wales
Birth Rate	13.34	14.9
Death Rate	11.02	12.4
Infantile Death Rate ...	58	58
Maternal Mortality Rate ...	0	3 23
Deaths from Diarrhoea and Enteritis under 2 years of age	0	5.8

Heart Disease ...	Was the cause of	28%	Total Deaths
Cancer ...	,,	15%	,,
Cerebral Haemorrhage	,,	10%	,,
Senility ...	,,	9%	,,
Influenza ...	,,	9%	,,
Tuberculosis ...	,,	4%	,,

SECTION B.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Bacteriological work is carried out at the Southern Counties Laboratory at Bournemouth.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

Infectious cases are removed to hospital by the ambulance stationed at the hospital. Non infectious and accident cases are removed to Hospital by an ambulance stationed at one of the garages in Bridport Borough.

NURSING IN THE HOME.

There is a District Nursing Association.

TREATMENT CENTRES AND CLINICS.

Maternity and Child Welfare (under the Dorset County Council).

Clinic held on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, and Ante-Natal Clinic on the fourth Thursday of the month at the Welfare Centre.

MIDWIVES

8 Midwives were registered by the County Council.

GENERAL MEDICAL AND GENERAL SURGICAL.

Patients go to the Bridport Hospital where there are 30 beds divided as follows :—

8 Male beds Medical and Surgical.
8 Women's Surgical.
4 Women's Medical.
2 Maternity.
6 Childrens' Cots.
2 Private Wards.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There is an Isolation Hospital in the Bridport Borough, administered by a Joint Hospital Board, made up of representatives from the Boroughs of Bridport and Lyme Regis, and the Rural Districts of Bridport and Beaminster. This Hospital has only floor space for 12 beds, and in order to comply with the requirements of the Dorset County Scheme, accommodation will have to be found for 6 more beds.

SMALLPOX.

The Rural District Council have made no provision for the hospital treatment of this disease.

CHRONIC SICKNESS.

The Public Assistance Hospital, Stoke Abbott.

SECTION C.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

WATER.

There are 12 parishes wholly supplied with a piped supply, and 4 parishes with part. There are ten parishes completely without a piped supply.

Beaminster parish has a most excellent piped supply, the water being collected from Beaminster Downs into a reservoir and then led by gravity to the town. This water is wholesome and sufficient.

In some of the parishes, collecting chambers are built round springs, the water being led to small reservoirs from which pipes feed the parish. In others, rams are installed to pump the water to higher levels so as to give the gravity feed.

No new supplies were provided during the year, but exploratory work is going on with regard to new piped supplies for the parishes of Mosterton and South Perrott. 61 samples were taken for bacteriological analysis from various sources during the year. No supplies are sampled as a routine, but Beaminster have decided to have 4 routine samples taken in the year. New pipe supplies are desirable in many parishes, especially Broadwindsor, Halstock, Marshwood, Mosterton, Netherbury, South Perrott and Stoke Abbott.

The water problem in a Rural District is a very serious one entailing constant supervision on the part of the officials because of contamination, and anxiety on the part of users of wells because of the liability of failing supplies. A considerable expenditure is necessary before the District can be said to have a wholesome and sufficient supply. It should not be an insurmountable difficulty to instal a piped supply to every village in the District. If this were accomplished, risk of contamination and insufficiency would be considerably lessened, and supervision enormously eased.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

Except for a few septic tanks, sewage treatment is non-existent. The sewage is run into the nearest and most convenient ditch or stream, with the result that all the water courses in the area are grossly polluted. This question will have to be tackled in the very near future, and especially the question of crude sewage pollution of the Brit at Beaminster. Apart from the Public Health point of view it is not fair that Beaminster should be allowed to pollute the Brit, which has to flow through the Bridport Rural and Borough Areas after leaving Beaminster.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

Beaminster and several of the neighbouring parishes have combined in a scheme to collect household refuse. The proposed tip for this refuse was confirmed by the Ministry after a public enquiry held in January, 1938. As regards the other parishes, only indestructible refuse is collected, and dumped in some convenient spot.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA

No. of Inspections	...	577		
No. of Informal Notices	...	46	No. complied with	... 31
No. of Statutory Notices	...	1	No. complied with	... 1

PETROLEUM SPIRIT AND CARBIDE

40 petrol and 3 carbide licences were issued during the year.

SMOKE ABATEMENT

Several observations were made.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS

No action was taken.

SCHOOLS

The water supplies and sanitary conveniences are not too satisfactory in many cases.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS

There are none.

SECTION D.

HOUSING

At the end of the year, the Sanitary Inspector and Medical Officer made a rapid survey of the whole area in order to ascertain the number of houses unfit for human habitation. They reported 107 such houses. The Council decided to attack the question parish by parish, commencing with those parishes disclosing the largest numbers of unfit houses This Rural Housing question is a large and difficult one because of enormous distances to travel and the small staff available. Anyhow it is pleasing to note that the Council are tackling the housing problem in a very energetic manner. The survey also disclosed the fact that approximately 120 houses are in need of extensive repairs. It is needless for me to dwell on the fact that good housing plays a tremendous part not only as regards the health of rural communities, but also upon the numbers engaged in connection with the land.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the Year.

1. a. Total No. of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ... 189
   b. No. of Inspections made for the purpose ... 395
2. a. No. of Dwelling-houses (included under sub head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 ... 24
   b. No of Inspections made for the purpose 33
3. No. of Dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation 47
4. No. of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation ... 90

2. Remedy of Defects during the Year without Service of Formal Notices.

No. of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers 5

3. Action under Statutory Powers during the Year.

a. Proceedings under sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936.
   1. No. of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs 0
   2. No. of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :—
      a. By Owners 0
      b By Local Authority in default of owners ... 0

b. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.
   1. No. of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied ... 0
   2. No. of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—
      a. By Owners 0
      b. By Local Authority in default of owners ... 0

c. Proceedings under sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936.
   1. No. of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made 3
   2. No of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders 0

d. Proceedings under section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936.
   1. No. of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made ... 0
   2. No. of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit ... 0

4. Housing Act, 1936—Part IV—Overcrowding.

a.	1.	No. of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year...	8
	2.	No. of families dwelling therein	8
	3.	No. of persons dwelling therein	62
b.		No. of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	1
c.	1.	No. of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	5
	2.	No. of persons concerned in such cases	34
d.		Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding	No such cases

5.	Total No. of new houses erected during 1937 ...	12
	No. erected during 1937 with State Assistance. ...	
	1. By Local Authority	0
	2. By other Bodies or Persons ...	0
	No. of houses owned by Local Authority ...	52
	Approximate No. of working class houses in District...	1600

SECTION E.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

COWSHEDS AND DAIRIES.

No. of Persons on Register at end of 1937	452
No. of Dairy Farms and other dairy premises on Register at end of 1937	452
No. of Dairy Farms inspected during 1937	219
No. of Inspections during 1937	246
No. of Notices served—129. No. complied with ...	Not known
No. of Milkshops inspected during 1937	1
No. of Inspections	1
No. of Notices served	Nil
No. complied with	Nil

Considering that there are 452 producers of milk on the Register, it is impossible with the present staff to inspect all the premises during any one year. Most of the milk is collected at the farms by motor lorries from the various milk factories, which sterilize the containers and return them to the farmers. This is more satisfactory and entails less risk of contamination, especially when there is no sterilizing plant at the farm. Much intensive propaganda is required before the standards set by the Milk and Dairies Order are attained. 5 samples were taken for Bacterial counts, 0 for Tubercle Bacilli.

MEAT AND OTHER FOODS

There are 9 Registered Slaughter Houses in the area In one of these, approximately 100 pigs are slaughtered weekly. This slaughter house takes up one whole day a week of the Sanitary Inspector's time. He paid 494 visits to slaughter houses during the year.

CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED

	Bovine	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
No. killed (if known) ...	270 *approx*	3000 approx.	4500 approx.	4700 approx.
No. Inspected ...	252	67	354	4487
All Diseases except Tuberculosis Whole carcases condemned ...	—	—	—	5
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	16	—	1	447
Percentage of the No. inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis ...	6%	—	—	10%
Tuberculosis only Whole carcases condemned ...	—	—	—	18
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	20	—	—	817
Percentage of the No. inspected affected with Tuberculosis ...	8%	—	—	19%

FOOD AND DRUGS

16 samples were taken for analysis by the County Council and all were found to be genuine. The articles sampled were: Camphorated Oil 1. Cocoa 1. Iodine (Tinc. of) 1. Milk 7. Medicated Lozenges 1. Marmalade 1. Margarine 1. Potted Fish 1. Sugar 1. Tea 1.

NUTRITION

No steps have been taken to increase the knowledge of the public on this matter.

SECTION F.

PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES

There were 12 cases of Scarlet Fever notified. 5 of these occurred in one parish. It was only through the co-operation that exists between the School Authorities and the M.O.H. that a girl suffering from the disease was found to be attending school; no doctor had been called in, she was the cause of the outbreak. 12 cases of Diphtheria were mainly confined to 2 parishes. The cases of Dysentry were confined to 1 parish, and the source was traced to ice cream sold by an itinerant vendor. Neighbouring parishes in adjacent counties also reported cases where the same ice cream had been retailed. There was a severe epidemic of Influenza causing 9 deaths

As regards hospital accommodation, 6 additional beds are required to comply with the County Scheme. I should like to have admitted complicated cases of Measles, Whooping Cough, and Influenza. These cases require skilled nursing which cannot be given in the vast majority of homes. This area has made no provision for the accommodation and treatment of Small Pox. No action has been taken during the year to provide artificial immunisation against Diphtheria, nor for the use of Measles Serum for Prophylaxis or attenuation.

PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS

There was 1 case of Ophthalmia Neonatorum notified. No defect in vision resulted.

TUBERCULOSIS

There were notified 12 new cases during the year. Pulmonary, Male, 2. Pulmonary Female, 1. Non-Pulmonary Male, 6. Non-Pulmonary Female, 3. There were 5 deaths from Tuberculosis. Pulmonary Males, 2. Pulmonary Female, 1. Non Pulmonary Males, 2.

NEW CASES AND MORTALITY DURING 1937

	NEW CASES				DEATHS			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		No-Pulmonary	
Age	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0—1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1—5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5—10	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...
10—15	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...
15—20	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
20—25	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
25—35	2	...	2	1	...	...	...	...
35—45	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...
45—55	...	1	1	...	1	1	1	...
55—65	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...
65 and over	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...
	2	1	6	3	2	1	2	0

DEATHS FROM TUBERCULOSIS, 1937

Sex		Age	Occupation
Female	...	50	Housewife
Male	...	58	General Labourer
Male	...	50	Gardener
Male	...	59	General Labourer
Male	...	54	Police Constable (retired)

PUBLIC HEALTH (PREVENTION OF TUBERCULOSIS) REGULATIONS, 1925.

1 milker found to be suffering from Tuberculosis was stopped from milking.

NOTIFICATIONS OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

DISEASE	Total cases all ages	Under 1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35	35-45	45-65	65 & over	Total cases removed to Hospital	Total Deaths in Hospital	Total Deaths
Smallpox	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	.	..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Diphtheria	12	...	...	...	...	1	..	1	3	2	1	4	...	11	...	...
Erysipelas	4	1	...	...	.	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...
Scarlet Fever	12	1	..	...	1	1	4	3	1	1	...	...	...	5	...	...
Enteric Fever	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	1	...	...	...		...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Puerperal Fever ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cerebro-Spinal Fever ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	..
Acute Poliomyelitis ...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...
Malaria	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	3	..	...	...	...	...
Trench Fever	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dysentry	10 ages notknown	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Encephalitis Lethargica...	...	..	...	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pneumonia	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	3	..	..	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	..	..	1	...	1
Non-Pulm. Tuberculosis	9	...	..	...	...	...	2	1	...	4	1	1	...	...	...	1
TOTALS ...	56	3	–	–	1	2	6	5	4	11	6	8	–	18	–	2

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES

INSPECTION

Premises	Inspections	Number of Written Notices	Number of Occupiers Prosecuted
Factories (Including Factory Laundries)	6	—	—
Workshops (Including Workshop Laundries) ...	15	2	—
Workplaces (Other than Outworkers' Premises) ...	—	—	—
Total ...	21	2	—

DEFECTS FOUND IN FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES

Particulars	No. of Defects. Found	Remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector	No. of Offences in respect of which prosecutions were instituted.
Nuisances under Public Health Acts :—				
Want of cleanliness ...	2	2	—	—
Want of ventilation ...	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding ...	—	—	—	—
Want of drainage of floors ...	—	—	—	—
Other nuisances ...	—	—	—	—
Sanitary accommodation: insufficient ...	—	—	—	—
Sanitary accommodation: unsuitable or defective ...	—	—	—	—
Sanitary accommodation: not separate for sexes ...	—	—	—	—
Offences under the Factory and Workshops Acts :—				
Illegal occupation of underground bakehouse ...	—	—	—	—
Other offences (Excluding offences relating to outwork and offences under the Sections mentioned in the Schedule to the Ministry of Health (Factories and Workshops Transfer of Powers) Order, 1921) ...	—	—	—	—
Total ...	2	2		